

AN
ANSWER

To A

Printed Letter

TO

Dr. W. P.

Concerning

NON-RESISTANCE,

And other REASONS for not taking the

OATHES.

With some Queries to the Non-swearers in a

POSTSCRIPT.

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S I R,

IT was too great a Favour that you should
*present me particularly with those Reasons
which our dissatisfied Clergy may have to offer for
themselves for their not taking the Oaths ; when
you were pleased to lay the chiefest stress of
their not doing so upon the Doctrine of Non-
Resistance, that you should single me out a-*
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mong all my Brethren, who were as much Preachers of it as my self, and put me upon the hard Task, as you thought no doubt, of reconciling *that* with the present Government and the present Oaths, or of renouncing the one or the other.

The Pains which some of you have taken in the *History of Passive Obedience*, shows that this is not the *singular* Doctrine of some few men but of *Most* if not *All* Divines, so that if it were a mistake, and a man had bin i'the wrong, he has a great deal of good Company with him, and need not be much ashamed of being call'd out to do Penance alone, or be taken to task for such a *General Error*. But however some of late are pleased to be very Angry or very Pleasant with the Doctrine of *Passive Obedience and Non-Resistance*, Rediculing and Exposing it as the *flattering Heresie* of the late Clergy, and talking against it at such a rate as if they would have *St. Paul's* words quite blotted out of the Bible, *They that resist shall receive to themselves damnation*; and when they are Friends to the present Government, yet do so far discredit it, as to be of their mind

to think it inconsistent with *that Principle*, yet I am perfectly of another Opinion, and think *that* as true a Doctrine now as it was in St. Paul's time; and that we are no way bound to recant it in order to our taking the Oaths; and joyning with the present Government, or that it is necessary to give up either the *one* or the *other*. That this is a Christian Doctrine in the general, as much as not *Revenging* or not *Killing*, St. Paul's words let it beyond all dispute, though there may be *Limitations* and *Exceptions* to them all in extraordinary Cases, and it requires great Prudence and Caution when we come to the particular stating of this; and run into nice Discourses about Government, which many a good Divine may no more understand than Matters of Trade; and therefore may be apt to mistake in some Cases of both, and commit great oversights in going out of his Province, and applying general Rules to some particular Cases that will not bear them. The way of rightly stating this Doctrine, I have always thought was according to the *Form* and *Constitution* of our Laws and Government; whatever *they* are we are to be passive to them, and ought not to resist that

that *Legal Power* and *Constitution* which is the *Ordinance of God* which he has set over us.

But to make it an Instrument to destroy our Laws and our Constitution by advancing Prerogative above Law, and setting up I know not what *Imperial Power* above the *Political*, and requiring such a *Loyalty* to the Prince in Conscience, as is no way due by the Law of the Land, which is the true Rule and Measure of our Duty, this is to state it wrong, and to squeeze and wring a great Error and Mischeif out of a Real Truth ; and whether this hath not bin done by a great many who have thereby brought an Odium and Discredit upon the Doctrine it self, I leave you to judge ; but there is not the least colour of charging this upon any of my Sermons, where I lay the matter very much upon our own Constitution, and allow expressly the other Provision in the *German Empire*, and in the *Capitulation of Spain* and the *Low Countries*, pag. 25. *Serm. 2.* But if the *Unlawfulness of Resisting* upon any pretence whatsoever, was a slavish Doctrine in England, as some inconsidering Men throw out against the Clergy, 'twas more owing to the two Houses of Parliament who made that a Legal Declaration.

Declaration, then to any of the Clergy who Preached it up.

I doubt not but *that*, as general and absolute as it was, carried in it the *Supposition* of the *Legal Constitution*; and was not designed to alter or overthrow *that*, but there may some extraordinary Cases happen which no positive Laws can provide against, or ought indeed to suppose, but when they do happen the plain Reason and Necessity of things will provide against them, and there cannot be certain and standing Rules made for them; but they fall under the *Equity* and *Reason* though not the *Letter* of the Constitution. I am fully of the mind that it is more for Publick Good and the Peace of the World; to teach People the Doctrines of Obedience to Governors, and Non-Resistance Generally and Absolutely, then to open a *door* to unquiet Spirits to disturb the Government they live under upon all occasions, but yet the greatest Divines who have Conscientiously done this, and particularly Dr. *Falkner* among our own, when they have bin unwilling to allow any particular and practical Cases of doing otherwise, because they do but seldom and extraordinarily

talk

fall out, yet when they do, must and cannot but allow an exception to a general Duty, as he particularly mentions the case of *Antiochus*, and of a *Princes* design to destroy and ruin a considerable part of his People contrary to the establish'd Laws; to which some think ours comes up under King *James*, and yet he still vindicates that General Declaration of *not Resisting upon any pretence whatsoever*, because that is ordinarily and generally true, and the exception to it is so rare and extraordinary as ought not to be taken in and supposed; and as no way hinders the Truth of such a general saying, as when holy Scripture declare that *Wives and Children must obey their Husbands and Parents* in all things; and *whom God hath joyned together no man must put asunder*. These Declarations how general soever, and how Exclusive they may seem of doing otherwise upon any pretence whatsoever, yet still are not without some Exceptions in extraordinary Cases, which all Divines do allow.

Some Cases may fall out in Government, though they ought not to be supposed, nor can well be provided against: As if a King shall

shall endeavor to destroy his People, to change the Constitution, to turn a Legal Government into an Absolute Empire; if he shall put a stop to Justice, and shut up *Westminster-Hall*, and give out no Commissions to Judges and Sheriffs, and appoint either none or other Officers then the Law knows; if he shall fall into Lunacy and Madness, or the like incapacity, if he shall voluntarily Desert and Leave the Kingdom without any Government; if the whole Royal Family shall be extinct, and there be no Lineal Heirs to the Crown; if the right Heir be dubious, or there be a reasonable ground to believe a supposititious Child put in the place of the right Heir: In these, and such like Cases there is no ordinary Provision made by our Law, nor indeed can there well or possibly be in all of them; but when they do happen, the plain Necessity and Reason of the thing must direct to some provision or other; and it is very unreasonable to quarrel with that because it is not in every thing agreeable with ordinary and standing Rules, and the exact Measures that the Laws do at other times require, but cannot then be observed.

This

This Sir answers all that is objected in the latter part of your Letter, which is the most considerable thing in it, *concerning the Convention and House of Commons, whither they had as you say, any Authority to Act as an House of Parliament in imposing these Oaths ? pag. 4. Let.* Because,

“ First, Our Law owns no Parliaments
 “ but what are called by the Kings Writs.

“ Secondly, Nor doth it know any Member of the lower House, but who are chosen for a Parliament.

“ Thirdly, Nor doth it give right to any
 “ to Act in the House till they have taken
 “ the Test.

“ Fourthly, And if any one enter and take
 “ their place there, before they have taken
 “ the Oath of Supremacy, their Place is void,
 “ and they are not at Liberty to take it afterwards, new Election is to be made ; 5 *Eliz. cap. 1.*

“ Fifthly and Lastly, The former Oaths
 “ of Allegiance and Supremacy have bin so
 “ imposed by divers Statutes, and are so expressly required of all Members of Parliament that none could possibly have a power
 “ of

“ of Substituting others in their stead till
 “ they had taken those and had swore, if not
 “ that they believed King *James*, yet at least
 “ that they believed King *William* to be right-
 “ ful King of this Land. *i. e.* The Members
 of Parliament were before their Sitting to take
 the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy to
 the King.

Now because this is true in all ordinary
 Cases must it be so in all extraordinary ones
 too ? Were all these things observed by the
 Convention in 1660 which brought in King
Charles the Second ? And are we therefore to
 be dissatisfied about the Laws they made, and
 the proceedings done by them, because some
 of you may think that by our Constitution, a Con-
 vention hath no power at all in Law ? And because they
 observed not all the ordinary Rules required
 at other times by our Laws ? If we do, we
 shall call in question the *Legality* at least of
 that Revolution, and that Convention as well
 as of this.

The Truth is, Positive Laws cannot al-
 ways be observed, but must give way to the
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greater Law of Necessity, and of notorious greater good ; and even the Laws of God himself have often done so, as we find in Scripture. When therefore you urge on your side some particular Laws of the Kingdom which you cannot wholly reconcile with the present Government, and this I believe is the great Difficulty that sticks with you ; we on the other side think it such an extraordinary Case as dispenses with those, and that the plainness and notoriety of the thing may satisfy any mans Conscience about it, and did so when the Prince of *Orange* came, even these who now dissent, not only wisht well to the Prince, and went over to him in their Hearts and Affections, but denied their Assistance to King *James* ; and did several other things which the Law would not warrant them in had it not bin an extraordinary Case ; and most if not all of you have to my knowledge owned you did go in with the Prince so far as his Declaration, which was not altogether strictly Legal I suppose, by any of our Laws in bringing a King by such a manner to good Terms, so that we must leave God to judge whither it was not in the whole, such an extraordinary

nary and extralegal Case as justifies whatever was done though not altogether according to express Laws and whither we have not acted sincerely in thinking so all along, and you unreasonably and perversly in thinking otherwise at one time, though not at another.

As to what you urge out of the Statute of 1. James 1. which declares *the Right to the Monarchy to have lineally descended to the Prince, and by Proximity of Blood, and that hereupon he was recognized and submitted to by the whole Nation, and not upon any Choice or Election of the People.* Who will not own this to be a common and rightful way of coming to the Crown in such an Hereditary Monarchy as ours is? But does that Statute say, that no other King of *England* who-ever came to the Crown, or ever should without such a Lineal Descent and Proximity of Blood, was rightful King? Or does it say that King and Parliament have not a power to limit and settle the descent of the Crown according to the Thirteenth of *Elizabeth*? Does it take away that Act by express Words, without which I think our Lawyers say no former Act is nulled or abrogated? What is it then to the purpose? Have not

King *William* and Queen *Mary* a right of Blood and Lineal Descent, if King *James* his Right be ceased? Do they or the Kingdom ever own or declare that they hold the Crown by the Choice or Election of the People? Have not half of the Kings of *England*, before the Conquest and after, bin as much or more chosen by the people according to all our Historians? Is there not a great difference between the Peoples Choosing and Electing of a King, and the States and Representatives of a Kingdom Recognizing and Declaring them to be King and Queen by whatever unnamed Right? When you have satisfied me in these Questions you will fully satisfy your self about that Matter.

You tell me there is another Statute of the same King, that enjoyns the Oath of Allegiance to him, as the true and Rightful King, and (which deserves well to be considered) makes it Treason to go about to perswade one to take the Oath to any else. Now is it any wonder or does it deserve any mighty Consideration, that the Law should make it Treason to go about to perswade one to take the Oath of Allegiance to him that is not King, this sure if any thing tends to the
Kings

Kings Disherison and Destruction ; and Parsons I suppose, and some of the *Popish* Party in the beginning of King *James I.* Reign had such a design against which that Statute is levelled ; but that which you bring it for, is upon the account of the *Rightful* King, so that you would have it meant against those who are for a King *de facto* only that is not *Rightful* : Now though this does not in the least concern me, but those who are of that Opinion, to answer, yet I believe this Statute had no Eye to any such thing nor is any way concerned about it, nor does it however take away the Act of *Henry the Seventh* about those who adhere to the King in Possession, but what you add to it is very Considerable, and the greatest though shortest thing in your whole Letter (for as to the business of Non-Resistance, I take that to be very impertinent to the Clergy's taking the Oaths, and to concern only a very few others) which is this ; So long as *Allegiance* is thus due to the *Rightful* King, you would be very kind if you would shew those that are dissatisfied, that they may transfer it to any other without Sin. Now, Sir, in answer to this, I must own that I know not how Allegiance can be due to two Kings at once,

once ; to a King *de jure* and a King *de facto*, no one can actually serve two such Masters, but if our Law allow such a distinction, which I am not at present to dispute, then it must by requiring Allegiance to the King *de facto*, discharge us at that time from the Allegiance due to the King *de jure*, and transfer it to the other ; if there be such a Law and Constitution of the Kingdom for the sake of Publick Peace and the security of private Persons, I would know what Law of God there is against it ? And then whether a Man may not without sin submit to it, and take the benefit of it ? But I think Allegiance to a Rightful King ceases, by his ceasing to be King ; and then it may be easily known it comes to be transfer'd to another.

As to the 12 Carol. 2. c. 30. That neither the Peers of this Land, nor the Commons, nor both together in Parliament or out of Parliament, nor the People Collectively or Representatively, nor any other persons whatsoever, have any Coercive power over the Persons of the Kings of this Realm. This will be readily owned, you know, by me who do not think that our Government is such as that of the
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Lacedemonians *under their Kings and Ephori*, and by all but those who are of the mind of the Judges of *Charles the First*; had those who were chiefly concerned in the late Revolution bin of another Opinion, *K. James* had bin stopt from going either to *France* or to *Ireland*. Our Peers and Commons in Parliament did not use any Coercive power over King *James*, nor give any proper judicial Sentence against him to exclude him the Government, as having any Superiority or Sovereignty over him, but only declared the throne Vacant of him for many Reasons, and that *William and Mary* were King and Queen of this Realm, and this they did, not as formal Judges but as Arbitrators made so by the necessity of the Circumstances we were then in, and however you may dislike their award and Arbitrement, for which they alone are answerable, yet if as private Persons you may not submit to it, you must break up the World, and disband the Society of Mankind, and necessarily run into a state of War and Confusion, and we shall be hardly able to live under any Government whatsoever. However you do not think I suppose that a Foreign Prince is tyed up and obliged
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by that Statute against making War upon a King of *England* when he suppoles him to have done him an otherwise irreparable injury, nor are the Nation hindered hereby from going over to the just side or bound to assist their Prince in an unjust Cause, especially when they know it would have bin to their own certain Destruction.

Thus I think the *Matter* might be stated without touching upon any of those Statutes you mention or the Doctrine of *Non-Resistance* and *Passive Obedience* which lye far enough out of the way from hindering our taking the Oathes or coming into the Government, though you think fit to throw them in as Rubs to keep you from both; but you desire me not to shift of the matter to a Conquest, which is neither owned by King nor People, and yet may be true enough in point of Conscience, though not insited on in point of Prudence; Nor to a Vacancy by a voluntary Desertion, which is a falsity in matter of Fact; and yet if it be well considered it will amount to as much as if he had bin brought to a Resignation under his hand, and may as well satisfie any Mans Conscience,

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for that might with as much reason be supposed to be as little Voluntary, and not without a design of returning to his Government again, if he could ; but this I dare assure you is true in matter of Fact that King James rather chose to go away, than to tarry and call a Parliament, and give thereby a reasonable Security to the Nation against Popery and Destruction ; and this was not only Voluntary but Deliberate too, and upon the Advice of his Popish Counsellors, and so far it was a Voluntary Desertion.

As to the Case of Non-Resistance, what I have ever taught from the Press or the Pulpit, in neither of which Chair I pretend to be Infallible, or have in a solemn manner professed that it is not lawful upon any pretence whatsoever to take up arms against the King or any Commissioned by him, I did it as you hope, and God is my Witness, in the sincerity of my heart, for the good of the World and Peace of Mankind, as I thought it agreeable to the Law of God, and the Law of the Land, and I do not think that either this or any other Wise Government, will think it a dangerous Opinion, or oblige any Divine to

Renounce or Recant it, and if any unseen and extraordinary Case should ever happen to be an exception against it, I am clearly of the mind 'tis much better to let it alone to provide for it self when it comes, then to mention it in a Sermon or Practical Discourse, and fill Peoples Heads with a Nicety they may be too apt to abuse. As to give you a plain Case, if you were to Preach against Stealing, and taking away another mans Goods without his consent, and were showing the great Mischief and Unlawfulness of it in all Cases, and how contrary it was both to the good of the World, and to the Laws of God and of Man, you would not, I suppose, think it Necessary or Prudent to acquaint your Auditory with that extraordinary Case of a Mans Stealing for the support of his Life, when he must otherwise starve, though you with *Thomas Aquinas*, and other Divines, thought it lawful to do so in such a Case of Necessity.

The Case of *Non-Resistance*, however high it was carried in all the likely and practical Cases, to stop most of the Holes at which Treason and Rebellion might be then apt to break out, or at least through which Factionous
Spirits

Spirits might as they pleased creep out of that ordinary Duty and Obedience they owed to the Government and have too many others to follow them , and so embroil and disturb the World, *by disobeying and resisting as they thought fit*, so that if we would speak to any purpose it was necessary to speak to those Cases and to show the unlawfulness of private Persons Resisting or Rebelling either in *the Case of meer Religion*, or *the Case of Legal Rights*, when we might justly complain with the Primitive Christians in *Tertullians* Apology that some of those were taken from us and yet still suffer patiently; or in *the Case of Natural Defence* which is not so allowable to private Persons against the Government as against one another, and *the Otherwise Remediless Case by the encroachment of Princes*, who are not to be Resisted for every encroachment. But in all these Cases there may be several degrees which you do not consider, and which it was not so proper for me to do at that time. However in all of them there is not that great, but one would think unlikely, and therefore unthought of Case, of a Princes Destroying the Community, and overturning the Government, and Ruining the

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greatest part of his People ; concerning which I desire you to consult Dr. *Falkner*, and see what he says about it, who has yet spoken as fully for *Non-Resistance* in all Cases as I or you your self can do; and I think now you find that true which you quote out of my Sermon, and which might have deserved another sort of remark from you, though it was spoke without the Spirit of Prophecy, namely, *That Gods Providence and Government of the World is the best Security in this and all other Evils we are subject to ; that the great Patron of Justice will set bounds to the Power and Injustice of Princes ; and as far as is necessary for the good of the World, and for his wise designs, so far they shall go and no farther ; that he will take the matter into his own hands, & satis est quod Deum expectent ultorem*, who will not therefore strike them immediately and miraculously with Thunder from Heaven, but raise up Instruments, and find out means in his Wise Providence to Deliver a people by those who were under no manner of Obligation from the Doctrine of *Non-Resistance*.

The Clergy who have taken the Oathes, were no more concerned in Resisting K. *James* while he was their King, nor in adhering to any that

that did so *in this particular*, than any of you who refuse the Oaths, and for that sin of Omission in not Assisting him, which is a duty we are ordinarily bound to by our Laws and by our former Oaths, *that* if it be one, is a common Crime we are both equally responsible for, and the same reason by which you *unloose your selves* from part of the Oath of Allegiance, which was to defend and assist the King, and which made you *not think your selves bound to keep that* when the Prince came because it tended to your manifest destruction, might have unloosed you from the whole, even, if you please *as Sampson did his withs*; and we think our selves now fully unloosed by his not being King.

I wonder therefore, and can hardly think you in earnest, when you bring such frivolous and unconcluding Reasons for your not taking the Oaths, or non-compliance with the present Government, which can satisfy no body; and if they expose any, 'tis those who bring them, as for example, *because ye would not be like a kind of Weather-glasses, by having your obedience to Governors higher or lower according to the temperature or variation of outward Affairs.* This fancy of Weather-glasses has had great Honour and Credit done to it by several of your party, and particularly by:

by the Wise Publisher of the *History of Passive Obedience*, who was pleased to put it into his Preface as the only piece of Wit there, and if any of you stand in the same need of it, and it be further serviceable to you, the Owner of it will still allow you the free use of it, but then pray take this with it, and all that belongs to it, That none may be so malicious as to think we Calculate our Sermons meerly for the present Circumstances, as if the Pulpit were a kind of Weather-glass wherein the Doctrine of Obedience to Governours is higher or lower according to the Temperature or Variation of outward Affairs, I challenge Malice it self to name the Pulpit where this Doctrine has faln so much as half a tenth since the late Revolution, or where the contrary Doctrine, to wit, the Lawfulness of Resisting has ever bin Preach'd by any unless perhaps by a Non-swearer ; so that I see no danger hereby of our rendering our Ministerial endeavors useles and ineffectual, or becoming a great Scandal and Disturbance to such as have known our former Doctrine and manner of Life and bringing a reproach upon the excellent Religion we profess. If any thing of this be, it is owing more to those who stand out, who thereby furnish some weak Persons with Scruples, and some discontented ones with Pre-
tences

tences against the present Government, but which of us do hereby render their Ministerial endeavors more useless and ineffectual, let the Body of the Nation judge, and let any of your selves judge by the small number of those whom you can bring to be of your Minds in your own Parishes ; if you come to consider Consequences, as ye thus object to us upon our coming in to the Government, what are those upon your standing out, but the Ruin not only of your Country, but of the Protestant Religion here, and all over Europe ; and the serving a Cause, and joyning in an Interest that no Honest Englishman or Hearty Protestant, though he may suffer for it in Conscience, yet can in Conscience wish well to ; you need therefore be as Cautious against those, as you are you say, against Treason, because you have bin told, and I hope you would have bin so, if you had not bin told, that Treason has stood so long in this Nation, in the late times, that it has run to seed, and scattered its principles, &c. and that it is a Disease, which though it be not like the Sweating Sickness of old, a Malady peculiar to Englishmen, yet the plenty and luxury of our Country may perhaps make us more subject to it than others ; I would therefore have your Party have a care of it, for I do not believe

lieve this Government will be more a friend to it than any other, but I think no man is exposed by a thousand such like Quotations either against Treason or for *Non-Resistance*, which will hold as long as there is any Government i'the World; and I am of Opinion that Treason is as great a Crime under K. *William's* Reign, and *Non-Resistance* as much a Duty as it was under K. *Charles's*.

I can easily grant you all that either I or others have said much better upon that Subject, while they have kept to the Laws and to the Constitution, and not run into such Notions and Schemes of Government as destroy both, and nothing will follow or be concluded from it that shall in the least injure K. *William*, if he be our true and proper Sovereign, or be any way serviceable to K. *James*, if he be not. This is the great Point which you have not hit, but may if you please make it the Subject of the next loving Letter between us: All that is in this I have answered with that kindness and openness that becomes a Friend, and *with that seriousness* that becomes a point of Conscience and such as I fear not to be ashamed of at the last day. And I am still, Sir, Yours and *Non-Resistances*.

Faithful Friend and Humble Servant,

W. P.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the Writing, but before I had the opportunity of sending this to you, a few *Scrupulous Quæries* came into my Thoughts, which seem to me to have more weight in them to incline a Conscientious Man to take the Oaths, and come in to the Government, then the Doctrine of *Passive Obedience and Non-Resistance* can have to keep him out and make him forbear; and therefore with the same Freedom and Civility you have used to me in desiring an Answer to those Scruples on the one side, I beg the favour of you to give a fair and plain Resolution of the other.

First then, I would ask whether it be, or were, a full judgment and persuasion of the downright Sinfulness and Unlawfulness of taking the Oaths, or only some doubts and scruples and dissatisfaction in your Minds about it that does or did hinder you? I have reason to think it is or was only the latter, because several of you have expressly owned this, and have therefore judged more charitably of your Brethren than to believe so

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many ventured upon an action that carried a downright Sinfulness and Unlawfulness in it ; but if others could satisfie themselves about it, and could do it, you thought they might, and did no way blame or condemn them for it. This I am sure was the judgment and the words too of many of you, *nay the best and greatest of your Dissenting Brethren did not say any thing to their Friends or so much as admonish their young Chaplains, and others who were under their immediate care, against taking the Oathes, when they knew they were inclined and disposed so to do. Now if they instead of some lesser doubts and private scruples had made a full judgment about the Sinfulness and Unlawfulness of this, how could they be excused for thus suffering sin upon others who were under their Charge, and not giving warning as Watchmen to those who belonged to their inspection ? who dwelt in your houses, and were within your gates ? whose Souls they were to take care of, lest their blood should be required at their hands, and their Sin should be charged upon their neglect. Nay, how could any of the Bishops satisfie themselves in not doing this to their whole Diocesses, and immediate Cures, whatever Worldly Perils and Inconveniencies*

niences they had hereby ran, that so at least *they might have delivered their own Souls* ? I take it therefore for granted that it was not a full judgment and perswasion of the downright Sinfulness and Unlawfulness of taking the Oaths, but only some lesser doubts and private scruples which hindered *them*, and many of you from so doing; if any of you have since come to a greater Plerophory, and your Convictions have risen with your Resentments, God and your own Consciencies must judge of that ; but whilst ye were only under those *Doubts*, and so thought it safer not to do the thing than do it, whilst ye thus doubted about it, and had some Scruples concerning it remaining in your Minds, I ask whether these doubts and scruples of yours should not have bin over-ruled by the many Reasons on the other side, by the great and evident Mischiefs of your standing out both to the Church and Kingdom, and the no less great good to the Protestant Religion both at home and abroad by this Revolution ? And whether it were not or had not bin Lawful in this Case, *to have Acted even with a Doubting Conscience* ? I am sure we have often told the other Dissenters so in the Case of Church-Conformity,

mity, and I question not but it is a true Principle that a man may and often ought to act with a doubting Conscience where there are only some scruples, and dissatisfactions that he cannot perfectly get rid off on one side, and such great Reasons as the Peace and Unity of the Church or Kingdom on the other, tho' never against an *Erronious* one where he has formed a full and complete tho' wrong judgment of the sinfulness and unlawfulness of an Action; and here by the way I would recommend to you, to consider over again and apply to your selves what ye have formerly said and written against those Dissenters in the matter of *Schisme*, and in the Matter of a *Doubting Conscience*.

Secondly, I Query, Whether most if not all of the Dissenting Clergy were not once well satisfied in their Consciences about the Prince of Orange's coming over, and rejoiced in it as their only Deliverance under God from their Ruin they saw coming upon the Church and Nation; when they wish'd well to him and pray'd for him, and went over to him with their Hearts and Affections, if not more overtly by Addresses and other Applications. Why should they then think themselves now so indispensably obliged to King James, and so inseparably bound to him by their Oathes

Oathes of Allegiance, which they then thought they were in great measure discharged and released from? For who then thought himself bound in Conscience to defend King James in all his Rights, Priviledges and Preheminencies whatsoever, according to the Oath of Allegiance, and to assist him to the utmost of their power against one who seemed and was declared by him to be an open Enemy and Invader? What Minister of the Church of England encouraged the Souldiers to Fight against him, and did not rather declare it unlawful so to do when it was so plainly fighting against their Religion, and their Country, which were then thought sufficient Considerations to supersede an otherwise necessary Duty? I ask therefore whither the same reasons which then satisfied us all, and which ye then thought released you from part of your Oath of Allegiance, and from giving King James that Assistance which had bin otherwise due to him, had it not manifestly tended to the utter Ruin of your selves and your Religion, and the whole Kingdom, may not as well and much better discharge you now from that Allegiance which ye pretend is still owing to him, and why they who were for taking away his Authority and Dispossessing.

possessing him of his Government by a Regency during his Life, and without his Consent as the only expedient to secure the Church and Nation from Ruin under him, should think they were under such a strict and unalterable Obligation to him by their former Oaths, and the Laws of the Land? Whither those were not more irreconcilable with such a method than with a New King? Farther, Whether those who sate in the Convention, and in the Parliament too when it was made such by the Authority of King *William*, till they went off upon the Act for taking the Oathes, did not own the present Government, and shake off that of King *James*? I would therefore beg leave to ask *those*, and all of you why you did so many ways leave King *James* then, and adhere so closely to him now? Whether ye have changed your Minds, and altered your Opinions, and repent of the Zeal which most of you showed for the Prince? Whether ye would not do the same things again ye did then if ye were in the same Circumstances? If so, if ye can alter your judgments in so little a time, why should ye so much wonder at others, and object it to them

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as an instance of their mutability and sudden change of their Opinions in the Case of *Non-Resistance*, and *Passive Obedience*, tho' ye have no reason for it, when so far as I see ye have as much Power over your own Minds, and have as suddenly changed your own Opinions, and acted, some of you, as inconsistently and contradictorily to your selves, as ye suppose others have done.

Thirdly, I would ask you, *Whether ye can produce any Examples of Christian Bishops or Priests or any other Christians since the times of our Saviour who ever suffered on such an Account or for such a Cause as ye now do? viz.* for not submitting to the Civil Government that was *Establisht* amongst them, and owned and acknowledged by the States and Representatives of a Kingdom, and for such a Cause as those who are honest and sincere cannot heartily wish Success to, or pray to God that it should thrive and prosper; for we have a better Opinion of most of you than to believe ye would have King *James* Conquer King *William* with the *French* Fleet and *Irish* Army, and that it was as far from you as from us to desire this a few Months ago, and that ye cannot in your Hearts wish that K. *James* should
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come back again in his present circumstances, unless so miraculously changed, and in such a wonderful manner that we may almost as reasonably hope that God should raise his Father and send him to live again and reign over us. Bating then such a Miracle as that, *what would ye have?* no Government, to which we should pay Allegiance, and from which we should expect Protection, but rather that all things should run into *Anarchy* and Confusion, as King *James* left them, till he shall please to return again? Alas a Kingdom cannot like a Woman deserted by her former Husband or Divorced from him, live single and not Marry again, but must have some Government immediately, and some other Ruler besides the Mob. When therefore in such a Case a Government is settled in a way ye may not like, but cannot help, in the best and only way it could then be; for either the longest Sword or most Votes must carry it, (which were then both of a side) nay when it is establisht in a way most agreeable to our old Constitution, must private Persons lose all they have rather then come into it? They must leave the World, and live in very few Governments
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long if they do this : Did any of the Primitive Christians do so who had as much reason to be dissatisfied with several Governments they lived under, and especially to question the Rightful Title of many of their Supreme Governors as you can have ? and yet never that I know of did they suffer on such an account, much less for such an *untoward* Cause as ye now do.

Fourthly, I would ask you, *If you believed the matter of Fact true that King James had put a supposititious Child upon the Kingdom to exclude the Right Heirs, and had made a League with France to overturn the Legal Government and Constitution, and had resolved to use the utmost Force and violence to bring in Popery by French Dragooning, and Irish Massacring, and were endeavoring and likely to accomplish all this ; whether in such a case ye could think your selves discharged of your Allegiance to him and that ye were no longer bound to him as your Rightful King ? If ye could, then ye must grant this Principle that a King may cease to be King, and lose his Right to your Allegiance without a Natural Death or voluntary Resignation, and then you will have as much to answer for Passive Obedience and Non-Resistance, as you think others now have ; when you shall send me word that you will give me*

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this Principle, and put the Issue upon the matter of Fact, I'll give you a further account of that. If you will not own this, but still hold to indissoluble Allegiance, and *Passive Obedience*, let the King destroy all his People and all the Laws and Rights of the Kingdom, and the Inheritance of the Crown too, and that in such a Notorious Case, his Right and your Allegiance still continue in full force, then ye stand to such Principles as will make Government a great Curse very often instead of a Blessing to Mankind, and such a Yoke as neither we nor our *Fathers* were able to bear, who did in vain settle any Legal Rights and establish any Legal Constitution if their Posterity are bound in Conscience to let go their claim to all this, and give it all up, when a rash and resolute Prince will be contented with nothing less, than destroying the Government by which he is King; I cannot believe that any of you can soberly and in good earnest believe such a Principle or carry it so high but only as it is necessary for you to defend your selves and your Case at present, and though you are then driven as far as we can follow you, yet like the *Irish*, your Refuge is in a Bog, and in the grossest

grossest absurdity ; however I am of Opinion if ye search your own Hearts, ye do not believe this, nor believe your selves bound to such an Allegiance still to King *James* as ye pretend, for if ye were, ye were bound to do all ye can to bring him in again, *to defend him in all his Rights, Titles, Preheminencies, and Authorities,* according to your Oath of Allegiance to him if that still oblige you, and to oppose all the Enemies to his just and rightful Claim and Authority, and to use some other Weapons for him than those of Prayers and Tears, and to live no longer peaceably under this Government than ye have a power and opportunity to destroy it ; and yet I dare say the best and most conscientious among you are not of this Mind, so that if you will give me leave to request the same favor of you, which you have done of me *to return such a serious and sincere answer to these Queries as you will not be ashamed of at the last day,* you will find you are more apt to contradict your selves and your own Principles in several things then any of us are in the business of *Non-Resistance and Passive Obedience.*

Fifthly, I would seriously ask you one Question

stion more : *Whether if it be lawful to take the Oathes, and come in to the Government, it be not a Sin to refuse them, and stand out ?* This I ask because I am apt to believe that most of you consider only the loss of your Preferments, and Worldly Interests as the only danger and hazard on one side, whereas there is a sin and all the Consequencies of *that* on the other ; and therefore ye look upon it as much safer and better to venture the penalty than the crime. Now if this were all, I confess it is so to a very good man who has lively Thoughts of Religion upon his Mind, and near Thoughts of Death, and mean Thoughts of this World, as a Wise Man cannot but have, who has lived long in it and enjoyed it, and even a Man of no great Goodness may be easily brought to do this when the Worldly loss and danger is not so certain but he has hopes by many ways to Escape it, and especially at a time when 'tis very uncertain which side is like to be the looser or the Gainer as to this World. But This is by no means putting the case right, nor using a just Ballance to weigh the difficulties on both sides, but 'tis leaving out the heaviest weight on one side which should turn the scale against all the rest ;

rest, Worldly Interest alone is easily weighed down with Peace of Mind, and a mans Eternal Interest, and sometimes with the mere Glory and Opinion of Suffering Persecution for Conscience sake, and the enjoying and gratifying a stiff and obstinate Humour that is not humble enough to yield or to retract a mistake; but the Consideration of that Mischief which a man does to Religion, to the Church whose Service he deserts, to the Kingdom whose Peace he disturbs, to his Parish and Flock whom he forsakes, to his Family, whom he ruins and undoes, and how much he becomes an Instrument, though against his Will, to serve *Popery* and the worst Interest i'the World, this should open his eyes and make him see a greater danger and evil on the other side then the mere loss of his Worldly Interest, and that it must be one of the greatest sins that can be and the most big with evil Consequences to stand out, if it be not utterly sinful and unlawful in it self to come in, and therefore if any man does the former out of any humour, perverseness or revenge because he is not pleased or things are not carried to his Mind, or because he will not be thought to Change his
Opinion

Opinion, or sneakingly come in to save his Preferment, and be laughed at for so doing, if it be from a point of Honour or any other reason but a Point of Conscience, such an one commits a greater Sin than can be committed on the other side, and runs the Hazard of losing something greater than the best Dignity and Promotion in this World. This I would therefore have ye all seriously consider and answer it, if not to me, yet to God and your own Consciences. Farewel, and remember you were the Aggressor.

FINIS.

